



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES DEADLINE FOR ELECTION TO PARTICIPATE IN STAGE 2 MOBILE SUPPORT FOR THE UNIENDO A PUERTO RICO FUND AND THE CONNECT USVI FUND

WC Docket Nos. 18-143, 10-90

In the *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*, the Commission made available \$258.8 million in Stage 2 high-cost mobile support over a three-year period to facilities-based mobile providers in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to restore, harden, and expand 4G LTE and 5G technologies for voice and broadband service in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.¹ For the three-year term, the Commission allocated budgets of \$254.4 million to Puerto Rico and \$4.4 million to the U.S. Virgin Islands.² In this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces the deadline for eligible facilities-based mobile providers to elect to receive Stage 2 mobile high-cost support.³

On November 7, 2019, the *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order* was published in the Federal Register.⁴ The *Order* provides that eligible mobile providers must submit their election to receive Stage 2 mobile support within 30 days of its publication of in the Federal Register. Therefore, the deadline for the election of Stage 2 mobile support is 6:00 p.m. on **December 9, 2019**.

The Commission determined that eligible mobile providers will have a one-time opportunity to elect to participate in Stage 2 high-cost mobile support by the deadline provided above.⁵ For each Territory, a provider that elects to participate will be allocated a pro-rata share of the budgeted mobile support based on the number of subscribers it served as of June 30, 2017.⁶ To elect to receive Stage 2 mobile support, a mobile provider must either (1) renew the certification it provided to the Commission as part of Stage 1 specifying the number of subscribers (voice or broadband Internet access service) it served in the Territories as of June 30, 2017 (before Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria); or (2) for any mobile provider that did not submit an election to receive Stage 1 support, submit to the Commission a certification specifying the number of subscribers (voice or broadband Internet access service) it served in the Territories as of June 30, 2017 (before the hurricanes), along with accompanying evidence.⁷ Providers must file a copy of the certification and accompanying evidence (if

¹ *The Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and the Connect USVI Fund*, Order, WC Docket Nos. 18-143, 10-90, 14-58, FCC 19-95, at 55, para. 102 (Sept. 30, 2019) (*PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* at 56, para. 105.

⁴ Federal Communications Commission, *The Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and the Connect America USVI Fund*, Connect America Fund, ETC Annual Reports and Certifications, 84 Fed Reg. 59937 (Nov. 7, 2019).

⁵ *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order* at 55, para. 104.

⁶ *Id.* at 56, para. 106.

⁷ *Id.* at 56, para. 105.

applicable) through the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System indicating the appropriate docket numbers, as well as email a copy to ConnectAmerica@fcc.gov.⁸

In the *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*, the Commission directed that (1) providers may elect receive up to 75% of the support for which they are eligible in exchange for a commitment to restore, harden, and expand networks using 4G LTE or better technology capable of providing services at speeds of at least 10/1 Mbps; and (2) providers may elect to receive up to 25% of the support for which they are eligible in exchange for a commitment to specifically deploy 5G mobile network technology, capable of delivering speeds of at least 35/3 Mbps.⁹ Therefore, as a part of its election for each Territory, a provider must elect how much, up to 75%, of its pro-rata share of high cost support to receive for use toward the restoration, hardening, upgrading, and expansion of networks capable of providing 4G LTE or better services, as set forth in the *Order*; and how much, up to 25%, of its pro-rata share of high cost support to receive for use towards the deployment of 5G mobile network technology based-services, as set forth in the *Order*.¹⁰

In addition to their elections, pursuant to the *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*, mobile providers must submit their Disaster Response and Recovery Plans along with their elections for Stage 2 mobile support and must receive Bureau approval of their respective Disaster Recovery and Response Plans prior to authorization to receive Stage 2 support.¹¹

Last, the Bureau reminds all providers that carriers receiving federal universal service support "shall use that support only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended."¹² As such, providers must use this funding to help restore and improve coverage and service quality to at least pre-hurricane levels and to help safeguard their equipment against future natural disasters, as described in the *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*.¹³ As provided in the *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order* all eligible telecommunications carriers receiving Stage 2 mobile support are subject to ongoing oversight and must comply with annual reporting and certification requirements.¹⁴

For additional information on this proceeding, contact Dangkhua Nguyen (Dangkhua.Nguyen@fcc.gov) or Rebekah Douglas (Rebekah.Douglas@fcc.gov) of the Wireline Competition Bureau, Telecommunications Access Policy Division.

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⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.* at 55, para. 102.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* at 67, para. 135; Appendix B (Disaster Preparation and Response Plan).

¹² 47 U.S.C. § 254(e); 47 CFR § 54.7(a).

¹³ See generally *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*.

¹⁴ *PR-USVI Stage 2 Order* at 64-66, paras. 126-32.